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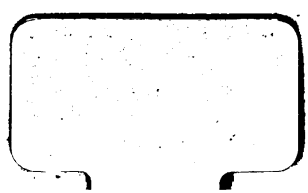

J. M. 1825

MEDITATIONS

AND

PRAYERS

PREVIOUS TO AND DURING

THE

RECEPTION

OF THE

HOLY COMMUNION.

VIATICA

LONDON:
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1824.

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PREFACE.

IN publishing this little Book, I do not presume to think I am giving to the Public any thing new, or more excellent than it at present possesses; many most incomparable books of meditation and prayer have been in the hands of all devout persons for the last two centuries, and Expositions of the Holy Communion are in every library, but they are, in general, treatises of considerable length, the devotional parts of which are mixed with much extraneous matter; and the more portable books of Preparation for the Sacrament, have been objected to as too enthusiastic, or as not sufficiently comprehensive. None of these are therefore in all respects adapted to the use of young persons; but it was thought that a little work

might be compiled from these various sources which would excite devotion without tiring the attention. Much, therefore, of this volume may be found in works already well known, particularly those of Bishops Taylor and Beveridge; from which have also been extracted most of the prayers. My most fervent wish is, that it may answer the end proposed, of making the Holy Communion more worthily thought of and more constantly attended.

MEDITATIONS,

&c.

MONDAY.

On the benefits of Attendance on the Holy Communion.

THE sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ on the Cross, is the consummation of all those promises made by a forgiving and merciful Creator to man in a fallen state, ever since the transgression of Adam. He was the Seed which was to bruise the serpent's head, the Star which was to give light to Israel, the Sceptre which was to rule over the nations, the Lawgiver who was to guide, the Messiah who was to save them. Till he appeared, and till he died, types and symbols kept up the hope and expectation of his advent, and sacrifices prefigured his death; but his cru-

cifixion closed the whole: he was the atoning Lamb, destined from the beginning of the world, to be slain for the sins of mankind: he was the universal Peace-offering; he abolished by his death the sacrificial ordinances of the law, nailing them to his cross; he opened a new and living way to everlasting salvation, and has not only left his example and precepts to guide us in it, but has promised the *continual* assistance of his Holy Spirit to encourage and comfort all, who, through well-doing, seek for glory and immortality.

Such being the importance of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, we might suppose that mankind would naturally cherish a continual remembrance of his death, which had secured to them such invaluable privileges; but Jesus knowing the instability of man, even in things most essential to his own happiness, has himself commanded a perpetual memorial of the event. Three of the Evangelists, St. Matthew,

St. Mark, and St. Luke, describe particularly the manner of this institution. Our Saviour and his immediate followers had met to celebrate the Feast of the Passover, instituted in commemoration of that night when the blood of the slain Lamb saved the worshippers of the true God from the general destruction around them; and was the type of the great and effectual deliverance made by Christ, our Passover. This had always been the most sacred festival amongst the Jews, but was now to become much more so; hitherto they had only celebrated the image of heavenly things, but now the heavenly things themselves; from henceforward they were to commemorate the real Lamb, who redeemed them from the spiritual bondage of sin, as the Paschal Lamb had from the temporal bondage of Pharaoh. Our Saviour's address to his disciples is entirely in reference to the circumstances of the feast. The Lamb was eaten with bitter herbs and unleavened

bread. Wine was also drank at this as well as at other religious feasts of the Jews; and the master of the house, after blessing the food, presented it severally to his guests. Jesus, therefore, when he was about to institute a memorial of himself, made use of the same emblems, which for so many ages had been held in the highest veneration, but alters their application. He had already been publicly announced by John the Baptist to be "the Lamb of God, which should take away the sins of the world;" and now, at his last supper with his disciples, after blessing the food, he presents to them the bread, as an emblem of his body broken on the cross, and then the wine, as a sign of his blood poured out for them; adding the injunction, that from henceforward they should take them in remembrance of him; thus ordaining a continuance of the same outward ceremonies, but giving them a more holy signification.

St. John, who in his Gospel chiefly supplies what had been left unrecorded by the other Evangelists, omitting to repeat a circumstance probably well known, and which they had amply detailed, relates at large some others which they had neglected to mention; that, after supper, our Saviour set an example of humility to his disciples by washing their feet; and then, in a discourse full of the most affectionate interest for them, confirmed their faith, strengthened them to support trials and persecutions, comforted them with the promise of the Holy Spirit, exhorted them to love and assist each other, and concluded by praying fervently for them to the only Giver of all Good. What a time to institute a ceremony in remembrance of himself! When they knew *that* was the last supper they should eat with him; those the last precepts they should receive from him, the last prayers he could offer for them on earth! and that he, their ruler and guide, was on the point of

completing their redemption by a voluntary resignation of himself to a painful and disgraceful death! How was it possible they could neglect such a command? We know, from various parts of the New Testament, that they did not; and if they did not, how should we? In saying to his apostles, "Do this in remembrance of me," Christ speaks to the whole Christian Church; they were the forerunners, the representatives of the Christian world, for in them was then centered the light of the Gospel, to be by them diffused to the ends of the earth. To all, therefore, who bind themselves to the same faith, the same command is absolute. The course of instruction, of consolation, and of command, has descended with an unbroken stream from Christ, by means of his apostles, to us: we have the evidence of Scripture to prove to us that this Sacrament was administered by them in the same manner in which they had first received it. St. Paul refers to it in several

places, and, to the Corinthians in particular, mentions the previous blessing or consecrating of the Cup, and the words used in its administration. " The same," he says, " which he received, the same which our Lord used," and which our Church has most properly adopted.

The Christian Church, in the earlier ages, considered this ceremony as the most solemn and the most essential which its religion enjoined; it made a part of daily worship; the bread and wine were even administered to infants, in the hope of making them heirs of salvation, by the communion of the body and blood of Christ, though they could not accompany the act with any acknowledgment of the commemoration of his death, or consciousness of the benefits received by it. Both these practices were afterwards discontinued. The communion was administered less frequently, and to those only who were

of sufficient age to understand the nature, and feel the benefits of this divine institution; but still the regular observance of it has been ever most scrupulously and devoutly continued in the Roman Catholic and Protestant Churches; though several sects have arisen in later times, who, applying the words of our Saviour in a spiritual sense only, neglect the observance of this religious ceremony. The English Established Church, however, adheres to the opinion and practice of the early Christians, considering rightly, that to dispute the judgment of the immediate followers of Christ, and to put a construction upon his words differing from theirs, would be to depart in a high degree from that humility so constantly enjoined by the Gospel. The duty of this service is, indeed, most imperative upon every true Christian, if we consider what it is which we commemorate, and what faith we then profess; the necessity of such faith to our eternal salvation, and the

confirmation which by this means it receives; for, by public attendance at the Holy Communion, we show forth to all the world the light of Christianity that is in us; we give thanks to God for the performance of all his promises, and for all the mercies we have received; we offer up our prayers for a continuance of them; and in the most solemn manner put our seal to the faith we profess, by declaring publicly our belief in every part of the Gospel dispensation; that the sins of mankind wanted a mediatorial sacrifice; that Jesus Christ was voluntarily made flesh, and dwelt on earth, where he passed a short life of infinite goodness, teaching doctrines whereby we might live for ever, and performing miracles in confirmation of his divinity; that by his own free will he became a sacrifice of atonement for us, fulfilling thereby the prophecies made from the beginning of the world; that as sacrifice for sin had been always required by the Almighty, and that no

remission for sin could be obtained without shedding of blood, so Christ, by the sacrifice of his body on the cross, and by shedding his blood, has abolished all the offerings for sin enjoined by the Jewish law; that, therefore, in Jesus alone is our salvation, being himself a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, whereby he obtained for us the victory over the enemies of our souls; that he ascended from the grave into the blissful regions of eternity, there to make continual intercession for all his faithful servants; that if we endeavour to walk in his steps, we shall, through his grace, obtain the rewards annexed to the performance of his precepts; that he will come again to judge the world, and that we shall be received with him into glory if we shall be found so fulfilling his commands. Such is the belief which should be cherished by every professor of Christianity, and which he declares by his reception of the blessed Sacrament; and by

thus believing, and professing our belief, we fulfil the commands of our Saviour, and may hope to become entitled to the rewards he has promised; for he has said, "He that hath my commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and we will come to him, and make our abode with him." Here is one of the benefits of the holy Sacrament, and affords indeed cause for reflection! Every act of obedience, and of faith, is the acting up to a precept, a performance of our part of the covenant, for which we may depend on a reward far more than adequate: the commemoration of the death of Christ is one of his commands, and we are told that if we fulfil them, "Christ dwelleth in us, and we in Christ; we are one with him, and he with us." To be one with Christ! What is this, but to be all goodness, all holiness, all happiness! to pass a life of excellence upon earth, looking forward to

eternal glory in heaven. With such sentiments deeply impressed on our hearts, could we receive the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, without feeling them confirmed? Do we perform any act of duty to God, or draw near to him by any kindness to our brethren, without being sensible of much internal satisfaction; without being strengthened in our principles of goodness? Certainly not. When we examine our own consciences; when we consider what we are going to profess in the holy Sacrament, and find our faith strong in the Lord; when we go forth avowing ourselves Christians in deed, and in truth, as well as by words; when we give thanks to God for his mercies, acknowledging our sins, and praying for an increase of his grace, we must surely retire from the table with all the blessings of renewed hope and strength in the Lord, a deeper sense of our own weakness, a firmer trust in the mercy of God through Jesus

Christ, and a more lively charity for all mankind.

The inducements, therefore, to receive the holy Communion, and the benefits derived from it, are these:—The avowal and confirmation of our faith; the commemoration of our redemption by the sacrifice of Jesus Christ; returning thanks to God for his fatherly care over us; offering up prayers for his continual assisting grace, and trusting that we shall be guided by his Holy Spirit, if we do not frustrate it by our own neglect.—And such being its duties, it follows, that the more frequently we renew the consideration of them, by our attendance at the altar, the more we are likely to increase in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, to become more zealous and steadfast Christians, to acquire an habitual piety, a constant sense of the presence of the Almighty, and more ardent kindness for all our brethren,

fellow-heirs of the same salvation. The Sacrament is administered usually only once a month: In that time, how many temptations may have assailed us! Into how many errors may we have been betrayed! Were it not that one day in seven is devoted to religious uses, many of us might gradually give ourselves up entirely to worldly thoughts and employments; and if we are sensible of the beneficial effects of keeping holy that day, emphatically called the Lord's Day, we ought certainly to neglect no opportunity of joining in the more solemn service of our Church, thereby to promote still further the eternal welfare of our souls. Those who are strong in the Lord will there be confirmed in their faith; those who are weak, and those who are fearful, should come, that strength and hope may be imparted to them; those who are in prosperity should come to give thanks, and to pray for humility; and those who are afflicted should come, that they may

receive consolation. No situation or circumstance of life can be a reasonable excuse for the neglect of this most sacred service; nor indeed would any reflecting Christian seek for an excuse; for, considering the merits of the institution, we can scarcely avoid observing it as one of our most essential duties; and we shall find, that it will support and comfort us in every trial, in pain, in sickness, in affliction, and in death: the consoling balm it will spread over the soul will make light the sorrows of its earthly tabernacle, and open before it the joys of that place, whither Christ himself is gone to prepare mansions for all his faithful servants.

THE PRAYER.

O Almighty God, infinite and eternal! who dwellest in that light which no mortal eye can approach unto; who fillest all things by thy presence; Thou art every where by thy

essence and by thy power; in heaven by thy glory, in holy places by thy grace and favour, in the hearts of thy servants by thy Spirit, in the consciences of all men by thy testimony and observation of us; look upon me, I beseech Thee, teach me to walk always as in thy presence, purify my heart from every corrupt affection, strengthen my faith in Thee, increase my charity to my fellow-creatures, and enlighten my mind to know the truth as it is in Jesus; for in Him thou hast opened the fountains of thy mercy, and hast invited all penitent sinners to come to be pardoned, the oppressed to be eased, the sorrowful to be comforted, the hungry to be filled, the thirsty to be refreshed with the waters of life. Admit me, O Lord, in thy mercy, to this effusion of thy loving kindness; teach me to have a right understanding of this divine institution, the Communion of the Body and Blood of Christ, that I may approach this awful Mystery with due prepara-

tion, and a heart fully disposed to love and obey Thee in all things; and being filled with the bread of heaven, and armed with the strength of the Spirit, I may continue and finish my journey through this vale of tears, with consolation and hope, unto my portion in thy heavenly kingdom, whither our Saviour Christ is already entered for us. Grant this, O Eternal God! for his sake, who died for us, who now intercedes for us, and by his Holy Spirit gives himself daily to us, Jesus Christ our blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

TUESDAY.

On the Duty of Examination.

AFTER rightly understanding the nature of the blessed Sacrament, the first thing necessary to do is to examine whether we are in a fit state of mind to partake in this service, and whether we may reasonably hope for the benefits to be derived from it.

St. Paul says to the Corinthians, "Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself." This address to them was in consequence of the improper manner in which they celebrated the Lord's Supper: they met, not merely to partake of bread and wine, as symbols of the crucified body and blood of Christ, but they made a feast; "one was hungry, and another

was drunken;" they profaned the mystical elements, as if they had been common food; they ate and drank in an unworthy manner, "not discerning the Lord's body;" and thus, instead of promoting their eternal salvation, by performing a solemn act of religion, provoked the Lord to lay heavy judgments upon them; and "for this cause," says St. Paul, "many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." Thus the idea of being unworthy to partake of this Communion, which many persons entertain from this passage, and therefore make it an excuse for their neglect of it, is so far erroneous, that the apostle only reproves the manner of the reception, not the unworthiness of the receiver; and though that unworthiness is certainly implied, he is so far from prohibiting the Corinthians from attending this service, that he rather commands them to come, but to examine themselves first. We may, then, from their example learn, that sickness and death

are the punishments God inflicts for the neglect of, or irreligious manner of fulfilling his Ordinances; and that lest we should in like manner condemn ourselves, we must examine ourselves before we presume to perform any religious duty, and especially before we present ourselves at the table of the Lord.

There is no duty in Christianity that has more solemnity, and more morality, than this of examination; yet, how carelessly do we perform it, if, indeed, we perform it at all! Though, if we consider that every circumstance of our lives may have in it temptations to withdraw us from the path of duty, we ought not only to examine ourselves when we are going to the Lord's table, not only when we are preparing our minds for the performance of a religious duty, and may, therefore, easily excite for a time all those devout affections which would fit us for the worthy

reception of these mysteries; but in the daily occurrences of life, whether we have been drawn aside, and how we might have avoided falling by the temptation that assailed us. It is nevertheless *especially* incumbent upon us to examine ourselves before we partake of the Lord's Supper, to inquire how far we have kept our part of the covenant between God and ourselves, before we presume to eat and drink at his table, and ask there for those blessings we feel ourselves in want of. The inquiry is not of light nature; since it is to discover, not what we are occasionally, but in every part of our lives, daily and hourly, in public and in private, in all circumstances and conditions; we are to consider our failings as if we knew that our last hour in this world was nigh at hand, and repent of them as if we heard the punishment for them already denounced.

The chief thing to be examined into is our

sincerity. What we are sincerely desirous to obtain, we generally exert our best endeavours to procure; and yet, though all men would say that they desire to be saved, it does not appear that all prove their sincerity, by putting in practice the means of salvation which they possess, nor examine how far they have neglected them. Do I therefore prove my sincerity, by my endeavours to act as far as lies in my power, according to the precepts of the Gospel, or am I satisfied with having the splendour of virtue in the eyes of the world, and overlook the secret motions of the heart? I was baptized into the faith of Christ, and a promise was then made for me, which by the act of confirmation I have since taken upon myself, to renounce all evil ways, to follow the commandments of God, and keep myself unspotted from the world. Have I so walked all the days of my life? have I fulfilled the baptismal vow, and indeed renounced the

Devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of the world? Not that it appears requisite to withdraw from the world entirely, for it would be an arrogance of singularity to avoid all its amusements; and if we were to withdraw from all temptations because we are too weak to withstand them, we should want confidence in God's assisting grace, and resolution to make any endeavours ourselves after righteousness; but as it is impossible for every body to retire from the world, so it is very possible to live in the world, and yet be preserved from its contamination, by a sense of the continual presence of the Almighty: this is the only safeguard in every temptation: for an habitual consciousness that he sees all our actions, understands every thought, and is present in all places to assist us if we ask him, to reprove and punish us if we wilfully offend him, would surely restrain us in every disposition to sin; would support us in every trial; make every duty lighter,

and add pleasure to every act of self-denial: every christian perfection would be increased in us; our faith in God's promises; our trust in his mercy; our charity to our fellow creatures; and we should reap the ineffable reward of peace of conscience, satisfaction in the present hour, and hope of happiness in future. Have I, therefore, so acquired, or endeavoured to acquire, this habitual sense of God's presence? or rather, when I enter into the business or pleasures of this life, when I am elated with joy or depressed by sorrow, have I not been engrossed by the interests or cares of the situation I have been in, and forgot the hand that directed every circumstance of it!

Fervency in our devotions is another subject for our examination; he that comes to the holy Sacrament, must have earnest affections towards God and religion, and particularly towards these divine mysteries. Am I

desirous of using all opportunities of joining with my brethren in prayer? Do I attend the house of God, and his holy table, only because it is a customary practice in which I was educated? or do I go with gladness to pray to him, and praise him, as in a place consecrated to his worship, and where Christ has promised to be in the midst of them who pray to him in sincerity and truth; and with sorrow for my sins, to petition at his altar for forgiveness, and an increase of support and strength against the temptations to come? Do I pray with the lips only when the heart is far away, or do I heartily desire what I seem earnestly to pray for? I ask for the spirit of God, for wisdom, and a right judgment in all things; and do I endeavour after that godly wisdom which passeth all understanding? I pray for humility; and do I not think, that to entertain a low opinion of myself would be doing myself injustice, and argue a poorness of spirit? I pray for contrition; and yet when I feel de-

pressed, do I not long to be comforted, and seek to drive away the recollection of faults which made me uncomfortable? I pray that God may be first in my thoughts; but do not the things of the world occupy the place of God? I pray against covetousness, pride, envy, uncharitableness, hypocrisy, anger, and every deadly sin; am I therefore contented, humble, patient, sincere, kind, and charitable? Great sins are easily discoverable, for the world attaches censure to them, and we are soon ashamed of them; but it is the faults which the world does not see which we are to search into; it is our carelessness in our devotions; our inattention during prayer; our tendency to think evil of our neighbours; to make no allowance for failings, the causes of which we do not know, and to think too little of their good qualities; our neglect of the opportunities we have of doing good; our proneness to anger, to pride, to self-conceit; and our neglect of that exa-

mination into, and watchfulness over ourselves, which would of itself be sufficient occupation for the concern of our whole lives. Another subject of examination, is the management of our time. Every person has business or amusements to fill up his hours; but we should consider of how great consequence it is, how they are filled up; upon the employment of our time here depends our happiness in eternity; and if we are to give an account of every idle word, of what essential importance is it that, in whatever manner we allot the disposal of our time, we should do all to the glory of God, and the good of our own souls; and that neither business nor pleasure should engross our attention more than is absolutely expedient, but, as far as is possible, God should be all in all.

Here are subjects enough of inquiry, and happy indeed should we be, if, upon strict and impartial examination, we should find

ourselves in a state of certain progression in a life of holiness; that where we were strong, we have continued firm; where we were weak, we have received support; that neither prosperity nor adversity, employment nor retirement, public offices nor household cares have disturbed our duty to God, to our fellow creatures, and to ourselves; but that faith, humility, and charity, have gone hand in hand, preparing us by a christian life on earth for the eternal bliss of the life of angels in heaven.

THE PRAYER.

O eternal and glorious God! who sittest in Heaven, ruling over all things from the beginning, Thou dwellest on high, and yet humblest thyself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth; Thou hast searched me, O Lord, and known me; Thou understandest my thoughts afar off, and art acquainted with

all my ways; for there is not a word in my tongue but thou knowest it altogether; be pleased to impart unto thy servant a ray of thy heavenly light; set all my sins before my face, that I may speedily and earnestly repent of, and forsake them all. Give me a knowledge of my infirmities, that I may guard against them; discover to me all my weaknesses, that I may reform them; and whatsoever is wanting in me towards the understanding of any thing whereby I may please Thee, and perfect my duty, I pray may also be revealed unto me. Teach me to judge with charity concerning all my fellow creatures; but to exercise over myself a severe and ingenuous spirit, condemning in myself what is criminal, suspecting what seems allowable, and watchful over even what seems good, that, by the assistance of thy grace, I may correct whatsoever is amiss, and improve whatsoever is right in me; and above all, give me an habitual sense of thy presence, that

my thoughts and actions may ever be so directed in the ways of thy laws, and the works of thy commandments, that in the great day of examination of all the world, I may be accepted by Thee, and may be reckoned amongst thy elect in thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

WEDNESDAY.

On the Duty of Repentance.

THERE is no duty more constantly enforced, both in the Old and New Testament, than repentance; and for this evident reason, that mankind have always sinned by their disobedience to the positive commands of God. And as peace of mind in this world, and hopes of happiness in the next, are only pro-

mised to those who repent of, and correct their sins, how can those who feel no sorrow for their sins, nor endeavour to overcome them, by which alone repentance could be proved to be sincere, expect to be accepted of God, or presume to say, they wish for acceptance by Him? since, if we believe the Scriptures at all, we must believe that he is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity, and rejects every *impenitent* sinner, whilst at the same time he pardons all who turn from their evil ways. Of this we have frequent instances recorded in the Bible, where, if the exhortations to repentance, and complaints of the obstinate impenitence of mankind, are numerous, no less so are the promises of forgiveness to all those who turn to the Lord their God. Amongst many examples are those of Ahab, one of the most wicked kings of Israel, whose punishment, just ready to fall upon him, was remitted upon his deep humiliation; and David, whose two-fold sin had called for

heavy vengeance, yet when he was recalled to a sense of his guilt, and, struck with remorse, could only expect some dreadful denunciation, his repentance was accepted with these consoling words, "The Lord hath put away thy sin;" and though punishment in some degree followed, yet he received forgiveness. In both these striking instances, the punishment for sin threatened to follow the commission of it immediately, but very frequently this is not the case; at least, it is not apparent to the world; and from hence, the idea that sins often pass unpunished, is a consolatory reflection, perhaps, to those who shut their understandings against examination and conviction; but can we suppose such apparently unpunished persons are dead to all sense of right and wrong? We do not then consider, that from the jurisdiction of conscience no one can entirely withdraw; and that even in the most brilliant scenes of splendor and magnificence, when all wears

the face of gaiety and happiness, the miserable sinner may be writhing under the excruciating torments of conviction, and self-condemnation.

We have, indeed, the example of the Israelites to warn us against blindness on this point; their journey through the wilderness is an emblem of our journey through life; and we find that their transgressions were *usually* followed by immediate punishment; but if not immediate, it was not remitted. "The Lord said, in the day when I visit, I will visit their sin upon them." The judgment was indeed deferred, but when it came it was tremendous.

In the new dispensation of the Gospel, the doctrine of repentance was still more urgently promulgated, and the practice of it encouraged by every motive that could act upon the fears and hopes of mankind. Jesus

Christ was not, indeed, in this respect, as in every other point of christian duty, a pattern for our imitation. His divine nature made this impossible; in this instance only his precepts could not be enforced by example; for how could infinite goodness have subject for repentance? But it was the special commission of St. John the Baptist to call upon every one to repent; as a preparation for the reception of that perfect law of life which Jesus Christ came to publish to the world. Our Saviour also confirmed the doctrine of his messenger, when he said, "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish."

The word chiefly used in the New Testament to denote the duty of repentance, signifies change of mind; it is a conversion from that proneness to evil, which every man must be conscious of, to a sincere endeavour to serve the living God in truth, by thought, word, and deed. True repentance, therefore,

is not a thing to be done once or twice; after glaring faults; or deferred to the last scene, at the close of life, when we may be too suddenly taken from off the earth to afford time for it, or may be deprived by pain or weakness of the power of reflecting; but, the whole life of man should be a continual repentance, for there is no day of our life in which we are not tempted to do what is wrong, or to leave undone what is right; and to what purpose would it be to examine ourselves as to our sins and weaknesses, if we are not struck with sorrow for what we find amiss, if we do not pray for pardon, and resolve to use our best endeavours to sin no more? Before the day of Communion especially, we should call to mind the resolutions we have already made and broken; how often we have wavered in our duty; and by what temptations we have most easily fallen; for if we do not first convince ourselves where the error lies, it will be of little use to renew our resolves, or

to look for redemption through the merits of Jesus Christ, who has declared repentance and consequent amendment of life to be the conditions of salvation. Conviction, therefore, must be the beginning of repentance, and is, perhaps, the most difficult part of it. Many persons who are screened by their situation in life, by good examples, and a careful education, from the commission of heinous sins, do not always recollect that guilt can only be proportioned to the temptation: that there can be no merit in avoiding great errors if there has been no provocation to commit them; and that in such situations especially, so highly favoured by Providence, small faults, continually overlooked and unrepented of, have in them as much guilt as greater crimes in more trying and dangerous situations; and every reflecting person must be well aware, that the only way to avoid committing grievous errors, is to keep a constant watch over the earliest temptations and weak-

nesses. Many also pass their lives in a seemingly complete inattention to their spiritual state, appearing too indolent even to examine if their path be right or not; and many may be deluded, and infatuated to commit evil, in the pursuit of objects which may falsely appear innocent. All mankind might, probably, be under such delusions and errors but for the protecting care of the Almighty, who in his mercy snatches his creatures from the effects of their own heedlessness by various means of warning. Some are awakened by the loss of friends, or fortune; some by disappointments, some by sickness, some by the counsel of friends, some by the incidents of life amongst their neighbours. There is no person, perhaps, who by one or other of these methods has not been called upon to consider his ways, to examine whether his sins may not have brought upon him this dispensation in anger, and to repent; and conviction being thus forced upon us, it depends upon

ourselves to allow it full efficacy, to attend to it, to feel that it is the voice of God that calls us, and never to forget its warning; then shall we have that godly sorrow for having offended an omnipotent, and all-merciful Father; and such a dread of the consequences of our conduct, that we shall eagerly proceed to the next step in repentance, the acknowledging and confessing our sins; and lastly, to earnest resolutions to alter, amend, and reform whatever we know to be amiss.

The motives to repentance are such as influence and produce all human actions; evil to be avoided, and good to be obtained; the judgments of God, consequent upon sin, and sure to overtake it, if unrepented of, being on one hand; and his mercies on the other, holding forth to us an all-enlivening, cheering, and comforting spring of unbounded light and love. There can be no hesitation which to choose; it only requires resolution to

abide by our choice, and to keep the object of it continually in our thoughts; for which our own efforts will not be sufficient, having to combat with all our former habits, and with the daily temptations of the world; alluring us to fallacious, present enjoyments, in preference to those pleasures arising from internal satisfaction, which may be less brilliant, but are sure and perfect. We must therefore pray without ceasing for the assistance of God's holy Spirit, knowing that it is faithfully promised to all that seek it in truth; and on our part keep a strict watch over ourselves, that, thus assisted, and keeping our lamp trimmed, we may gradually be prepared for our departure hence, and be fitted to join that society to which we have been aspiring, that of just men made perfect; for a holy life is the firm ground upon which we cast the anchor of hope in the mercies of God through Christ Jesus, by which we trust that our repentance here will be rewarded hereafter by

pardon and justification, and admission into eternal glory.

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and most merciful Father! the Author of Pardon, of Life, and of Salvation, who hast compassion upon all men, and hatest nothing that Thou hast made; Thou wouldest not the death of a sinner, but rather that he should turn from his evil ways, and be saved; look down mercifully upon me, who am not worthy to look up to Heaven; let me not perish in my sins, nor be consumed in thy heavy displeasure; for when I consider my offences, I am sensible that they are great and numerous; that the temptations of the world draw me away from the duties I would practise, and the christian state of mind I wish to maintain. Many things I have done which I ought not to have done, and have

omitted many which it would have been right to do; desirous of leading a life of holiness, I am yet careless in the means of attaining it; and unobservant of those failings towards my fellow creatures, which we are most apt to fall into, and which should therefore be more strictly guarded against. When thou smitest me, then I confess my sins; but when thy visitation is past, I forget that I have wept. In the disposal of my time, in the improvement of my temper, in humility, and in charity, I continually offend against thy laws; I turn to Thee, acknowledging my sins, with full purpose of correcting whatever is contrary to thy will; but beset as I am by evil practices and new temptations, my own strength is not sufficient; I am not able of myself to overcome them; to whom then can I go but to Him who loved us and died for us; who is the Saviour of the penitent, the life of the dead, and the advocate for sinners? I beseech Thee, therefore, who didst

redeem me from the utmost penalty of sin, to strengthen me with thy Holy Spirit, to work in me true repentance, and to turn me from darkness to light. Give me grace to discover and amend all sins of ignorance which I have committed for want of due care and circumspection, and grant me thy aid to overcome the greater sins which are contrary to my christian profession. Give me time and space to repent; and grant, that as by thy holy inspiration, I do sincerely resolve on an entire reformation, so by thy merciful guidance, I may faithfully perform the same. Increase in me the spirit of piety, charity and humility; assist me, that I may spend the days allotted to me upon earth religiously and usefully, subduing every evil inclination, and practising every duty of the station in which Thou hast placed me; that when Thou shalt see fit to take me from this state of trial and temptation, I may look forward with humble confidence, that Thou wilt pardon the sins committed here, and receive

me into the place Thou hast prepared for me by the blood of the everlasting covenant, where all tears shall be wiped from our faces, and sin and death shall be no more. Grant this, most gracious God, by the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ our Saviour! Amen.

THURSDAY.

On Faith.

Before we can worthily partake of the blessed Sacrament, it is especially necessary to consider whether our faith be perfect and sincere, for it is only through faith we can look for any benefits from these holy mysteries; and faith, in its full extent, is that guiding star which would lead us safely through the trials and temptations of this life, and would not only fit us for a worthy

reception of the body and blood of Christ, but gain us admission amongst the purified spirits in heaven, encouraging us in the hour of death to hope that we may join the angels and archangels in praising and magnifying the Lord. For faith comprehends every duty, in thought and practice, which our holy religion enforces: and the absolute necessity of having it is urged by our Saviour in the most impressive manner; he rewarded those who declared their belief in him, by healing their infirmities; he wrought miracles for the establishment of faith; he exhorted his followers to maintain it in themselves, adding promises to his exhortations, and sent them forth to publish it in the world. At one period, no persons were admitted to partake of the Sacrament but those who were peculiarly styled the faithful; that is, not merely those who professed a belief in Christ, but such whose faith was ardent, who had overcome the world, and were become real servants of

Christ, disciples of his doctrines, subjects of his kingdom, and strict observers of his institution. Such a faith as this is, indeed, necessary to every communicant, because, without it, a christian is no more than a name. This is, however, not sufficiently considered in general: many persons do not think it necessary to examine the grounds of their belief, that they may be able to give a reason for the hope that is in them, but are satisfied that they acknowledge the leading truths of christianity, having been taught them, from their infancy, by their parents or guardians; and they have received and believed them as they did other instructions from the same authority, not seeing any thing to contradict their assertions; but a mere assent to what we have been taught, without a knowledge of the grounds of belief, can never be sufficient to guard us from being led astray by any plausible reasoning, which wicked and designing persons may

assail us with, or by any fanciful theories which our own imagination, or that of others around us may raise, to the total destruction of peace of mind in this present world, and of the comforting hope of a more perfect state of happiness in that which is to come. To the want of faith, indeed, all disputes in religion may be attributed; the self-sufficiency of man drives faith from its hold, seeks superior knowledge in paths forbidden to mortal creatures, plunges the mind into a chaos of distractions and fears, sets at nought the revelations of the Almighty, and casts over the bright existence, promised beyond the grave, a mist of doubt and horror. From hence have arisen such a variety of sects and opinions, each party supposing itself wiser than its neighbours, each arrogating to itself a clearer interpretation of the word of God; some from impiety, and others from an over-eager curiosity, endeavouring to destroy faith by prying into mysteries which they cannot

understand, to make clear to their finite comprehension what God has thought fit to reveal but dimly, and to set up chimerical notions of their own in opposition to scripture. But we are not to walk by sight, but by faith or hope; and as St. Paul argues upon this point: "Hope that is seen is not hope for what a man seeth, what doth he yet hope for." And we are to "cast down imagination, and every high thing which exalteth itself against the knowledge of God; bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."

And why should any one imagine faith to be opposed by reason, when, on the contrary, it is confirmed by what is called the light of nature? for "the invisible things of Christ, his eternal power and godhead, are clearly seen, being understood by the things which are made;" for, in this natural world, we are surrounded by wonders past our comprehension. "The wind blows where it lists,

and we hear the sound thereof, but cannot tell whence it cometh, or whither it goeth." The face of the sky, the appearance of the heavenly bodies, have been matter of consideration from the earliest times, and yet afford continually increasing wonder and admiration. The formation of various substances within the earth, the production and revival of trees and plants upon its surface, are all past our finding out. Man is born, lives, and dies! but his life is a continual miracle; we can scarcely tell in what manner it is preserved, or what is removed when he ceases to breathe. In all these wonders, there are innumerable grounds for the firmest faith in an invisible, omniscient Power; and it is advancing scarcely a degree in our belief, to acknowledge the reality of those things above this sublunary sphere, which, for a trial of our faith, have been as yet merely shadowed forth to us. The eternal co-existence of Christ, the Word, with God the

Father; the incarnation of Christ; his assumption of human form, human affections, and human sufferings; his mission upon earth; his performance of miracles; his atonement for our sins upon the cross; his resurrection from the tomb; his ascension into heaven; his becoming a perpetual intercessor for us; the diffusion of the Holy Ghost; the second advent of Christ at some future time; our resurrection from the grave; the judgment of mankind; the efficacy of the sacrifice upon the cross in the forgiveness of our sins; and our final distribution into those mansions prepared for us according to the deeds we have done in the body; are certainly subjects of belief of a far more sublime nature than what fall almost daily under our observation upon earth; but not more miraculous, not more bespeaking Almighty Power, incomprehensible Majesty, and infinite Goodness. Ought we not then to receive the word of God, as it is in the Scriptures, as

little children? in simplicity and godly sincerity, acknowledging the truth of those things He has allowed to be revealed to us, and believing the truth of all which are dimly hid from us, neither adding any thing to them of our own fancy, nor diminishing aught from them; having a firm and consoling hope, that, if our lives here are acceptable to God, we may in another and higher state of being be endued with adequate comprehension of all those blessed things of immortality, which the pride of man seeks now to penetrate, without possessing powers equal to the task: "now we see through a glass darkly," but then we shall see clearly.

The duty of faith, then, is not of difficult attainment if humility be our guide; it is a fullness of confidence in God, in consequence of a sense of our own weakness, and a real expectation of the fulfilment of all his

promises made from the beginning of the world. We believe that the penalty for sin lay heavy upon all mankind, and we are sufficiently sensible of our own failings to know, that the load of guilt is constantly accumulating; but through faith we are convinced, that the self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ upon the cross has removed from us this weight of punishment; that he appeared upon earth in a miraculous manner to give us a law wherein we should walk; trusting from his word, that, having faith in him and following his precepts, we may, when this earthly tabernacle is to perish, exchange a life of trial here, for one of bliss in heaven, where our faith will receive its full consummation. We cannot indeed, in these latter days, expect to perform sensible miracles through our faith, like the apostles; but the saying of our Saviour, "That if we have faith we could remove mountains," we may still admit the force of, as regarding ourselves, though we vary

the interpretation. Our evil passions, our pride, envy, covetousness, all which St. Paul calls the works of the flesh, are as fixed, apparently, as the mountains of the earth, but faith can remove all these, aided as it ever is by the holy spirit, the comforter which Jesus Christ has sent; and by teaching us, that the trials of life may be intended as blessings in the end, faith produces resignation to support all our afflictions with meekness.

What then, though I feel my sins are great, I will humble myself, and trust in the redemption of my Saviour, who loved me, and gave himself for me: though I fear the temptations of the world, I will remember that faith in Jesus Christ will obtain the grace of God to overcome them: though the afflictions of this life are many, I know that all things work together for good to them who love God: under every dispensation I will look to his word for support, and when I am

to leave this world, I will look forward with hope to those realms of bliss, where I may see God face to face, and join the angels in heaven in comprehending and adoring Power infinite, and Mercy everlasting. And to attain this, I will endeavour, while on earth, to improve and confirm my faith, by a constant attendance at his table; where, by openly professing my christian belief, I may be confirmed in holy thoughts and resolutions; where, by prayer and thanksgiving, we dedicate ourselves more ardently to God; and, by receiving the Communion of the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ, look for all the benefits of his atonement for us on the cross, and his intercession before the throne of God; from which, therefore, we derive new life and new spirit, and feel that there is shed over us a sanctifying influence, which will be our consolation and our shield unto death.

THE PRAYER.

Blessed Saviour Jesus! the Author and Finisher of our faith, the Fountain of life and salvation, Thou art the beloved Son of God, the Lamb slain from the beginning of the world, whose coming was foretold by the prophets, and attested by angels; who dwelt upon earth to direct us in the way to heaven; who died to procure our pardon, and who ever liveth to make intercession for us, that we may be admitted where Thou dwellest; I believe in all that the prophets and apostles have declared of Thee and thy kingdom, but I beseech Thee to strengthen my belief by the influence of thy holy spirit; Thou knowest me to be in the midst of many and great dangers, and that from the frailty of my nature I cannot stand upright; grant to me therefore such strength and protection as may support me in all dangers, and carry me through all temptations; let the sense of

my weakness give me meekness and humility, and add strength to my faith; grant me comfort and sure confidence in Thee, knowing that through Thee alone can I look for acceptance with God; let thy grace illuminate my understanding, purify my heart, direct my will, and sanctify my spirit, that I may have Thee and thy law always in my mind, and may think and do always as in thy sight, that in all temptations and afflictions, and at the hour of death, I may be supported by faith in thy word and promises; and grant by the mercy which Thou hast purchased for us, that as Thou wert partaker of our sufferings and infirmities, so we by thy death and resurrection, and by thy infinite gracious intercession, may be made partakers of thy holiness and glory in thy heavenly kingdom. Amen.

FRIDAY.

On Resignation.

THE duties of examination, of repentance, and of faith, may be said to have their chief reference to a future state of existence; for we examine and repent of our sins, that we may endeavour to remove every obstacle to our attainment of eternal happiness, and our faith leads us to depend upon that reward which is promised to every penitent sinner. Resignation has its most immediate concern with this life: man is born to trouble; the trials of affliction and disappointment are around him everywhere, and are sent to correct and purify his heart; no person is exempt from suffering, either bodily or mental; none of us can be sure that our ease and happiness are secure for one hour; the very

next moment may overwhelm the seemingly fair fabric, and those who have multiplied their enjoyments by increasing their stores, or extending their connections, have proportionably multiplied the avenues of sorrow, and extended a broader mark for the shafts of disappointment. But afflictions come not by accident; they either come immediately from God, or are the consequences of human actions, by the permission of God in his government of the world; and in whatever manner we receive them, their purpose is the same; they are trials of christian virtue, and warnings against evil; and they are dispensed in such differing measure to different persons, that we may conclude such a trial is sent to each, as God in his infinite wisdom sees to be best adapted to the proposed end, that *all* sinners may awake to righteousness, and from being children of this world, may become children of light. To some, therefore, bodily pain is sent, to others mental afflic-

tions; some are tried by distresses peculiarly their own, and some through the misfortunes of their friends; but all proceed from the same source, and all may be supported by the same means. Resignation is, however, not easy of attainment in that measure which becomes a follower of Christ: the acuteness of pain, the gnawings of disease, and the weariness of debility, are trials which, perhaps more than any others, have a tendency to sour the temper, to produce selfishness and discontent, and render us insensible of pleasure from any brighter part of our lot: neither are they confined to the body, which cannot be powerfully affected without the mind suffering also; and the powers of reason and reflection being oppressed by the sufferings of the body, lose their elasticity and force at the very time when their best energies are wanting. Others have their greatest trials in the sensations of the mind; trials beyond the reach of medi-

cine to alleviate, and deeper than any human aid can remove, though offered by the kindest sympathy and affection. In this train of afflictive dispensations, are the distractions and fears of doubt and distrust; disappointments in projects that seemed praiseworthy; and in hopes apparently well-founded, transitions from affluence to poverty, the anxiety of watching the slow, but sure progress of disease in those we best love, and the snapping asunder, by death, of those ties upon which every earthly happiness seemed to depend.

Such, in a greater or less degree, are the trials allotted to every human being in this probationary state, although they do not act with equal force upon all. External evils are more easily borne by some than by others, owing to less sensibility of feeling; and where pain is little felt, little strength of mind, and consequently little virtue is required to bear

it; and the composure shown in such cases may be more properly called apathy than patience, and cannot therefore be considered meritorious: we may, also, often observe a similar lightness of impression, produced by the warnings of adversity in its various shapes; differing, however, according to the disposition of the person, or the circumstances of situation in life. Some have a natural gaiety of heart, which misfortune cannot depress; they view all events in the fairest light, out of every evil extract some good, and do not distress themselves with considering whether it could come as warning or punishment, endeavouring only to rejoice all the days of their life. Some drive away the sensation of present evils, by seeking other sources from whence they may derive pleasure; and others resist affliction by a calmness of mind inherent in their nature, which carries them almost unruffled through disappointment and distress. But to many the

pangs of misfortune come in all their bitterness. Pain, with all its aggravated horrors, makes life a burden; the distresses of others come as barbed arrows against our peace, and afflictions fall so thick upon us, that sorrow and sighing seem to be our only portion in life: we may, indeed, say, "what shall deliver us from this body of death?" And the answers to such a question are to be found in almost innumerable passages of scripture: "Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth." It is resignation to the will of God which alone can heal the wounds of affliction, and blunt the arrows of misfortune; and this can never fail, for the resignation of a christian is not a solitary virtue, it is attended by humility, which tells us, that the punishments sent by a God of mercy are not proportioned to the magnitude of our offences; by a conviction of the continual presence of God, who is about our path, and about our bed, and ordereth all things to work

together for good to them that love him; and by faith in his promises, that in due time we shall reap if we faint not, and that though we now go on our way weeping, we shall rejoice in the end for the days in which we have suffered affliction. Pain and calamity are the great springs appointed by Providence to move the activity of our intellectual and moral powers; for if prosperity were the universal lot of mankind, what exercise would there be for some of the gentlest feelings of the heart, and the noblest powers of the mind, compassion, generosity, charity, temperance, forbearance, resignation, disinterestedness, and magnanimity; all those virtues which we most admire in others, and from the practice of which we derive most satisfaction ourselves? Were this world not a state of probation, it must indeed have been very differently constituted from what we see it, and human nature could not be what it is; for if we were defended from all external evils, the mind,

as it is now framed, would prey upon itself; and discontent, corroding the heart, would convert blessings into curses, the sources of pleasure into misery. It is not those whose lot in life is most prosperous, whose happiness is most complete; on the contrary, they are the happy whose fiery passions have been subdued, whose keen feelings have been softened, whose minds have been purified by affliction, by which the world is crucified unto them, and they unto the world; who see the hand of God in every occurrence, whether of joy or sorrow, and feel that divine favour attends them in every stage of their existence, sanctifying prosperity, and turning adversity into a blessing. Such only enjoy a peace of conscience which diffuses serenity over all the powers and faculties of the soul, sweetening the converse of society, and spreading over solitude and retirement pleasures which the world cannot give. Afflictions, therefore, are necessary for us and useful, and

are often productive of the highest satisfaction to ourselves, by the exercise of feelings which dignify and adorn human nature, and make us conscious of having a higher destination, to which our faculties may be adapted if we aspire here to angelic perfection. There are, indeed, many sorrows so deep, that, unassisted, human nature would often sink under them; but faith, humility, and patience never fail to bring us consolation from our Father who is in heaven; they give us manna in the desert; they bear us up against the impressions of pain, and maintain us in the free exercise of reason and conscience, amidst all the evils to which we are exposed; they produce that steady composure which prevents every useless expression of suffering, and a self-possession which enables us to fulfil the duties of the moment, notwithstanding the pressure of grief. For though the resigned christian may acutely feel the evils of his situation, though his body must yield to the

natural effects of pain and disease, and though his sorrows are many, he is not conquered by them; for he has a mind above their power; he knows that though the outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day; that He, in whom he trusts, may yet lift up his head; but, at all events, he is assured that to those will be given eternal life, who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and immortality; and that the sufferings of this present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed, when those who have come out of great tribulation, who have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall appear in the presence of God; and, before assembled men and angels, shall be admitted to dwell before the throne of God, and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell with them, and God shall wipe all tears from their eyes, and they shall live for ever and ever.

"Shall then tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword, separate us from the love of Christ? In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us; for I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

THE PRAYER.

O God, our heavenly Father! the Creator, Disposer, and Governor of the world, and all that is therein, who appointest the several states and conditions of man as seemeth best to thine infinite wisdom, and hast ordained that all earthly enjoyments should be fleeting and unstable, that our affections may be

drawn to those eternal pleasures which are at thy right hand, where goodness and perfect happiness are for ever united; I most humbly beseech Thee to grant me that perfect resignation, which will teach me to acknowledge thy providence in every circumstance of my life; to be cheerful and contented in whatever condition Thou seest fit to place me, from a deep sense of thy never-failing protection and fatherly care, seeking only to do my duty in such a manner as may please Thee; to maintain a calm serenity of temper amidst the daily vexations I may meet with; and to have a mind raised above the cares and concerns of this life, by the contemplation of that higher state of being, when our purified spirits may be admitted amongst the heavenly host, who are ever before thy throne. Teach me to enjoy the blessings Thou bestowest upon me with gratitude, but with humility, knowing that they proceed entirely from thy undeserved goodness; and if Thou art pleased

to resume them, assist me by thy holy spirit to repress every murmur, and to resign them with contented submission to thy will; and the most perfect conviction, that, however bitter the affliction may be for the present, it is ordained in mercy for my good. If Thou triest me with sickness, may I bear it with patient fortitude, as inflicted by thy hand. If Thou seest fit to remove from me the friends I delighted in, I pray that Thou wouldst receive them into thy heavenly kingdom; and give me grace to pass a life of such purity and holiness here, that when the time of my departure comes, I may yield up my spirit with the firmest hope and trust in Thee, and may be re-united to all I loved and valued whilst on earth; and at the last day I may with them attain to the resurrection of the Just, and have our perfect consummation in bliss, both in body and soul, in thy eternal and everlasting glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with Thee, and the Holy Ghost,

be ascribed by us, as by angels and archangels, and the whole company of heaven, all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

SATURDAY.

On Charity.

ANOTHER essential qualification in the christian character is charity; and of this we may be convinced if we examine the striking difference between the tenour of the Old and New Testament in this respect. The first partakes throughout of the spirit of the law delivered by Moses, which inculcated the severer duties of justice between man and man; and strict obedience to the commands of God, which obedience was chiefly shown in the observance of rites and ceremonies. Warnings the most awful, and denunciations of punish-

ment the most appalling, abound in every part; it is only when allusion is made to the Messiah and his kingdom that a milder spirit prevails.

But the Gospel contained in the New Testament is altogether a law of mercy, and its characteristics are beneficence and love: even the warnings against sin, and the exhortations to repentance, are not delivered with threatenings to alarm us, but with tenderness, and an anxious fear lest, by our own carelessness or wilful guilt, we should lose the bright inheritance prepared for us. "God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved."

The life of our blessed Saviour was a continual example of charity; all his miracles were acts of compassion and loving-kindness: and in preaching forgiveness of injuries, for-

bearance, and universal good-will, he abolished the sterner law of Moses, which allowed of retaliation for evil,—"an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth;" and gave to his followers a new commandment, that they should love one another. He announced himself at Nazareth as being sent to heal the broken-hearted, and to show forth his love for mankind by relieving their distresses. In his Sermon on the Mount, he said, that even acts of devotion are not acceptable to God, if brotherly kindness is wanting: "First be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift." In the same discourse he exhorts us to love even our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us,—and why? That we may be called the children of God. He enjoins us to give alms freely, and not to judge our brother's faults; but to do unto others as we would they should do unto us. When his disciples were sent to preach the gospel throughout Israel, he gave them particular

directions to attend to the poor and the sick. When the disciples of John were sent to him to be convinced whether he was the Messiah or not, the proofs he gave of his divine mission were not of awful power and majesty, but he healed the infirmities of those who surrounded him, and desired the messengers to tell John what they had seen, as a convincing testimony of his being the Son of God, by his acts of charity and compassion. When Peter inquired how far forgiveness of our brethren should extend, our Lord gave such an answer as proved that forgiveness should know no limits; and he pronounces a parable afterwards to declare, that, as our Father in Heaven has many trespasses to pardon in us, we shall bring upon ourselves his most awful punishments if we do not equally forgive our fellow-creatures. In another place also he desires, that when we pray we should forgive if we have aught against any, that we also may be forgiven. The necessity

of charity and pity is again strongly enforced in our Saviour's answer to the young man, who came to him to inquire the certain way to eternal life, boasting at the same time of his obedience to all the commands given by Moses: the answer he received, and the subsequent observations of Christ to his disciples, imply, that, unless he bestowed the riches committed to his charge in relieving the necessities of his brethren, he could hardly enter the kingdom of God, though his other duties were fulfilled; while, on the contrary, Zaccheus, also a rich man, claims favour, and obtains it, on the ground of his conduct towards his fellow-creatures, his justice and his charity. And in describing the final judgment our Saviour exalts the virtue of charity, when he mentions *that* alone as entitling us to everlasting life; while the neglect of those amiable qualities, which would have produced pity and brotherly kindness, draws down upon the wicked that dreadful sentence, "Depart

from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire." His last discourse to his disciples is full of entreaties to love one another; he breathed upon them the spirit of peace: "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you;" and he closed his life with a prayer for the forgiveness of his enemies.

The apostles followed the example set them by their divine Master: the persecuting vehemence of St. Paul's natural character was softened into tenderness as soon as he became a disciple of Christ; he addresses all his converts in the most affectionate manner, 'as brethren;' he beseeches them, exhorts them, entreats them; even his sharpest reproofs are given with tender anxiety; he conforms to the weakness and infirmity of all that he may gain all; he begins all his epistles with a prayer, that peace may be given to all whom he addresses, and continues them with the same benevolent feeling. "We were gentle

among you," he says, "even as a nurse cherisheth her children." "I exhort you with tears." "Without ceasing I make mention of you in my prayers." His doctrines teach us the regulation of our own minds, while they inculcate love to our brethren: "Let love be without dissimulation. Be kindly affectioned one to another; rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep; live peaceably with all men; give place to wrath; if thine enemy hunger feed him; overcome evil with good. Put away evil speaking, with all malice, and be kind one to another, tender hearted, forgiving one another, as God, for Christ's sake, has forgiven us. Every one of us shall give an account of *himself* to God; let us not therefore judge one another any more: we, that are strong, ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Put on, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, kindness, long-suffering, forbearing one another, and forgiving one another; and

above all things put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness: comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient towards all men." And in his beautiful description of charity in the 13th chapter of his first epistle to the Corinthians, he comprehends in it most of the ornaments of the christian character; meekness, universal gentleness, content, humility, disinterestedness, self-denial, patience, forbearance and kindness.

St. James declares, that to visit the afflicted is one of the signs of pure religion; and he frequently recommends gentleness, good-will to all men; and, especially, consideration for the poor. "The wisdom which is from above is peaceable, gentle, easy to be entreated, full of mercy, and of good fruits."

St. Peter exhorts all men to have compassion one of another, to love as brethren, to be pitiful and courteous, not rendering

railing for railing, but contrariwise, blessing. "Above all things," he also says, "have fervent charity amongst yourselves."

St. John's epistles are full of the most earnest persuasions to the love of God and our neighbour. He says, "He that doeth good is of God." And he questions how the love of God can abide in those who have not kindness for their brethren.

Thus, in considering the conduct and precepts of our blessed Lord and his apostles, we must be convinced, that without charity "we are nothing worth;" that it forms one of the most beautiful and most essential characteristics of christianity: but that to attain it in that perfection which our Saviour practised, and which St. Paul describes, is indeed difficult. Charity, in its most general acceptation is confined to alms-giving; and we are, indeed, very frequently enjoined to distri-

bute to the necessities of our brethren; to give alms to the poor, bread to the hungry, clothes to the naked, and shelter to the houseless; but to this we may be impelled by our natural feelings, which, revolting from the sight of misery, excite in us an almost involuntary wish for its relief; and if this can be effected by a slight sacrifice, we make it cheerfully. But St. Paul says, we "may give all our goods to feed the poor, and yet may not have true charity." We must endeavour to do good in other ways, to the souls as well as bodies of our neighbours; and to effect this, we must begin by governing ourselves: we must subdue our own tempers to avoid irritating those of others, restrain our feelings when the expression of them would wound those of our neighbour, meet anger with gentleness, disarm malice with patience, and bear injuries with mildness, that we may overcome evil with good; accustom ourselves to self-denial, that we may be better able to

relieve the necessities of others; and discountenance vice, by letting the light of christianity so shine in us, that those who see our good works may, by the grace of God, be brought at length to glorify our Father who is in heaven.

Another benefit to be derived from self-government is, that, from the consciousness we have of our own infirmities, and of the difficulty of overcoming them, we shall learn to obey with greater ease another precept of the gospel—To judge others as we would ourselves be judged. This branch of charity is, perhaps, the most difficult of attainment; for to speak and think with kindness of those who have failings or vices which we are commanded to disapprove of, and which are extremely unpleasant, or perhaps injurious to ourselves,—to pray for the sinner though we condemn the sin,—is a perfection which only a christian can aspire to, but which may

certainly be acquired, by keeping strict guard over ourselves. The failings of every body are soon known; we can all see the faults our neighbour commits, and we justify our censure by the plea, that we are commanded to "abhor that which is evil;" but how seldom do we know the palliations which might be found: the misfortune of bad education or bad examples, the trials of sickness and adversity, the temptations of pleasure and self-interest, have such powerful influence upon the character of any individual, that it is impossible for us often to judge rightly in what estimation we should justly hold either the good or evil that we find; but we know, that we ourselves have not profited as we ought by the various blessings and trials God has dispensed to us; that we are prone to evil, weak in temptation, and apt to fall continually, unless upheld by the protecting hand of God; we ought, therefore, to look with compassion upon those who may appear to us

more weak and erring than ourselves, knowing that the consequences of guilt are so dreadful, that even the most hardened sinner is entitled to the utmost commiseration; praying always to God and our Lord Jesus Christ, that such as are in error may see the light of the truth; that the weak may be strengthened; the sinner converted and pardoned; that at the last day, when the secrets of all hearts are disclosed, they may with humble hope plead for mercy at the feet of their Saviour; and trusting, that, as Christ died for all, so all may by some means be saved. We, therefore, whose lot has been thrown into a fairer ground, have a sufficient task to perform, in endeavouring to keep ourselves unspotted from the evil we see around us; perfecting holiness in the fear of God, that we may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke; shining forth as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life, that we may rejoice, in the day of Christ, that we

have not run in vain, or laboured in vain; but may be admitted to dwell where love and peace will reign for ever, and hear those transporting words addressed to us, "Come ye Blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

THE PRAYER.

O Almighty God! who hast taught us that all our doings without charity are nothing worth, pour into my heart that most excellent gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues. In all my actions let it be my desire and delight to do good; in conformity to the example of our blessed Redeemer, may I pass through this world innocently and usefully, having a conscience void of offence towards Thee, and towards all men; and so employ the talents and opportunities Thou hast given me, that, in whatever

station I may be, I may glorify Thee, my Creator, and do whatever is in my power to promote the interest and well-being of my fellow creatures, carefully abstaining from whatever might be injurious to them by my example. And I beseech Thee to accept my prayers for the whole race of Mankind; supply the wants of such as are in distress; look in mercy upon the sick and afflicted; let them not despise thy chastening, nor faint when they are rebuked of Thee, but strengthen their patience and faith in thy mercies: let them feel the support of thy providence over them, that they may cheerfully acquiesce in thine appointments, and in thy good time deliver them out of all their afflictions. Pour forth thy holy spirit upon all orders of men, in all parts of the world; strengthen the feeble-minded, and convert the sinner: let the truth of christianity shine forth in its genuine simplicity, beauty and glory, that the glad tidings of salvation may be known

and received amongst all the inhabitants of the earth, and produce the fruits of righteousness and goodness, peace and truth, throughout the world. Purify, enlighten, and reform the christian churches everywhere, especially those of this kingdom. May all who profess the religion of Christ live suitably to the name whereby they are called; and those who are in the error of superstition and idolatry, turn from darkness to light, that they may finally receive an inheritance amongst them who are sanctified by faith; and that they, with us, may all be at length admitted into thy heavenly kingdom, one fold under one shepherd, Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

SUNDAY.

On Prayer.

THE duty and efficacy of prayer have been felt and acknowledged in every age from the creation of the world: the sacrifices made by Cain and Abel imply, that an offering of prayer and thanksgiving was then appointed to be made, and the observance of this command was never entirely lost, even in the degeneracy of mankind; for a sense of human weakness, and the conviction of there being an invisible Power, who governs the world, have always produced, even amongst the most barbarous nations, some sort of invocation to the Deity.

Throughout the whole of the Old Testament we find, that frequent and fervent prayer was

a distinguishing feature in the character of all good men in all ages; and very many instances are recorded of miracles which were performed, and most unlooked-for blessings granted upon the earnest supplication of the righteous, or the contrite petition of the sinner: "He that serveth the Lord shall be accepted with favour, and the prayer of the humble shall pierce the clouds."

But to a christian no other argument is necessary to prove the excellence and necessity of prayer than this: that Christ prayed. He, the Son of God, the Word, who was in the beginning with God, and was God, even he found the efficacy of prayer in enabling him to support the infirmities he had made himself subject to when he assumed the human nature. Both public and private devotion are strongly enforced by his example: we are frequently told by the Evangelists, that he retired to solitary places to pray alone:

upon one occasion St. Luke mentions, that he passed the whole night in prayer; it was his custom to attend public worship constantly; he enjoined his followers to pray always, and taught them in what manner to form their petitions. We may remark, also, that, when he prayed with such fervour in his agony in the garden, he kneeled down: kneeling is, unhappily, less practised now than formerly; but it is the posture most indicative of humility and reverence: it was practised during all the most solemn acts of devotion recorded both in the Old and New Testament; and certainly no other position seems so compatible with fervent prayer. And what attitude can be too humble when we consider the relation in which we stand to God? for we pray to him as creatures to a Creator, whose wisdom and power are infinite, who by his own will called us into being, who preserves us during his own appointed time in a world to which he has

adapted our comprehension and powers; and from which he will, when he sees fit, remove us, to place us in another state of existence, according to the deeds we have done here, and to which he will also roportion our faculties.

We have also to implore his mercy, as sinners before an offended God; for all men sin, some deeply and habitually: and even the best come short of the glory of God; all have some passion to subdue, some weakness to overcome; either pride, or vanity, or avarice, or love of pleasure, or some defect in temper; and the task we have to perform is, to watch with vigilance over the faults, whatever they may be, and correct them, till Christ is all in all. This is our probation: we have sins to overcome, and will to choose between life and death, good and evil; but to follow what is good is so difficult, that we should, perhaps, desert our post, did not God

assist us by reminding us in various ways of the prize that is before us; and the work may be completed when, by the sincerity of our prayers, we can obtain the influence of the Holy Spirit to guide us through our task, till our souls are called from their earthly dwelling to other regions, where they may be thoroughly purified from all mortal stain, and receive their full and perfect sanctification from the merits of Christ in the presence of God.

We pray also, and give thanks to God, as children to a parent, who commands us to declare all our wants to him, though he knows what we need before we ask him; sees all the dangers that surround us, and our struggles to overcome them; removes from us many evils, though we may not be aware of his kindness, and leads us in the way by which we may attain eternal happiness, only requiring from us obedience and affection. As

fellow-heirs, therefore, with Christ, let us pray that we may resemble him in humility, in charity, in self-denial, in his uniform piety, and entire conformity to the will of God: the great end of prayer is to obtain ability to submit meekly to his pleasure, and admittance into that blessed place where God is, and where Christ sits at his right hand. These are things which we cannot entreat for too often, and there are others which we may be allowed to ask for, under the sanction of our Saviour's example; but the first thing to be considered is, the disposition of our minds. Prayer is a duty more generally practised than perhaps any other: we are accustomed to it from our childhood, and we continue it as a matter of course; but where is the fervent sincerity which should make our prayers the rule of our lives? they are often the work of the lips, not of the heart; and can we wonder if they produce neither comfort nor benefit? No person, perhaps, is

able to pray at all times with equal earnestness; but God, who sees the heart, probably looks upon this weakness as resulting from the imperfection of human nature, and therefore will pardon it; and certainly, the more frequently we pray, the less difficult we shall find it to withdraw our attention for the time from our temporal concerns and interests. It is not necessary to make long prayers, for that which our Saviour gave to his followers is a striking example to the contrary; but it is essential to acquire that seriousness which results from a deep sense of our entire dependance upon God, and our obligations to him; and this may indeed be called a natural feeling, for we cannot avoid being sensible that we are weak and helpless, that we can scarcely control one circumstance of our lives, and that it is out of our power to bestow life, or health, or prosperity, or any other advantages we might desire, either upon ourselves or our friends: and in our spiritual

warfare we find, as St. Paul says of himself, "some law warring against the law of our minds, that though to will is present with us, how to perform what is good we find not:" nor can we find it but by prayer; and this will be effectual if it is offered with faith and submission. "All things whatsoever ye ask in my name, believing, ye shall receive." This was the promise of our Saviour to his disciples, and we have every evidence from scripture that fervent prayer availeth much. Yet it does not always follow that, by believing only in God's power to grant our petitions, we are certain to receive all we ask for: were this the case, the covetous might pray for more wealth, the proud for honours, the vicious for pleasures; and we can all admit, that if such prayers were always granted, wickedness and misery might be accumulated to a degree dreadful to think of. Even the very best of us must join humility to faith when we pray, for we scarcely know what to pray

for as we ought, therefore our petitions may be refused in mercy to us, or not granted in the manner we wish, though they may be in some other way more adapted to our benefit. Our part is to place the most unshaken reliance on the goodness and promises of God, and continue to solicit with earnestness such things as we want; for we are told to "pray without ceasing," and "in every thing by prayer, and supplication with thanksgiving," to let our requests be made known unto God. Our Saviour prayed that the cup might pass from him. We therefore may pray for deliverance from temporal evils, for health, for prosperity, for all we want or wish for; but we must add the humility of Christ to our earnestness, and say, "nevertheless, not my will, but thine be done." Christ prayed for strength to support him in the trial he was to undergo; we may also pray for patience and fortitude in all our afflictions, for assistance in all our undertakings. Christ prayed for

his disciples while on earth; and we believe that he still intercedes for us in heaven. We then may pray for blessings upon our relations and friends, for their health and peace here, and for our joyful reunion with them hereafter. Christ also prayed for his enemies, thereby teaching us to pray for all mankind, for the evil as well as for the good. He prayed not only for his immediate followers, but for all who should believe in him through their word. And we ought to pray for the welfare and union of his church; that "the Lord of the harvest may send forth labourers into his harvest;" that his ministers may be "zealous and blameless as the stewards of God, holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience;" that the gospel of Christ may be so effectually propagated to the ends of the earth, that all nations may come to the knowledge of the truth, and "the kingdoms of this world may become the kingdoms of our Lord and his Christ."

The beneficial effects of prayer are proved by the influence it has over the morals and conduct of mankind; for it is impossible any person should attend constantly the public service of the church, and join his fellow-creatures in solemn acts of prayer and praise to the Creator, without feeling himself better and happier; and the satisfaction resulting from it is so great, that a habit may almost insensibly be produced of addressing our heavenly Father, in every circumstance that occurs, by those secret, silent acts of prayer and thanksgiving, which, though unknown to, and unobserved by, any human eye, are marked by Him who seeth in secret, but who will reward us openly. The advantages and comfort of prayer are indeed infinite and inestimable, amongst which there are none greater than the cheerfulness and serenity it diffuses over the mind and temper; even whilst we are on earth we feel connected with heaven; our affections become spiritualized,

and raised above the trifling concerns of this transitory life; in the midst of the world our minds will be fixed on immortality, till we acquire an habitual disposition to aim at being perfect as God is perfect; and when we rise from our knees we shall resume our occupations, or enter into society, defended as with a shield from the temptations we may meet with, with hearts full of goodwill to our brethren, just in our transactions with them, charitable towards their failings, compassionate to the needy and afflicted, and anxious for the salvation of all mankind; we shall be temperate in our enjoyments, bearing prosperity with moderation, and adversity with calmness, and thus promote the glory of God by showing, that religion has power to subdue every passion, and soothe every sorrow; that "her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

THE PRAYER.

Almighty and Eternal God! the King of kings, and Lord of lords! Thou only art holy, and to Thee alone belong salvation, and glory, and honour, and power. I praise and magnify thy name for all the numberless benefits Thou hast bestowed upon me during the whole course of my life, for my health, reason, friends, and all the comforts I enjoy, but especially for the consolations of religion. How can thy creatures return sufficient thanks to Thee, O Lord, for thine abundant mercy in sending thy Son Jesus Christ into the world to redeem us from iniquity, by declaring to us plainly the terms of thy forgiveness and favour, to instruct us in true religion, and reveal to us the certainty of a future life! I would beseech Thee to grant that I may not render myself unworthy of these inestimable blessings, but that the example and precepts of our blessed Saviour

may so influence every thought and action, that I may subdue every evil disposition, and fulfil every duty of the station in which Thou hast placed me; in every circumstance of my life, whether of pleasure or of sorrow, let religion be my guide and my support; make me fully sensible of the blessing of being continually in thy presence, and under thy never-failing protection; and raise my mind above the vanities of this present world, that it may be fixed upon Thee, the supreme, the infinite Good, who alone can satisfy the immortal desires of our souls, and in whom alone we can be completely and eternally happy. Bless thy universal church; let the ministers of the gospel adorn their doctrine by their example in charity, in faith, in purity; and grant that all who call themselves christians may be animated by a pure and fervent zeal for the honour of religion, and the glory of thy name. Especially I pray for myself, and all who hope to receive this day the Commu-

nion of the Body and Blood of Christ, that we may be found so acceptable in thy sight, as to receive from thy mercy all the benefits of that sacred institution; that our sins may be forgiven, our faith confirmed, our charity enlarged; and that, being blessed and sanctified by thy holy spirit, we may constantly go on still towards perfection, as the children of God and disciples of Jesus Christ, till we become meet for the inheritance of the saints in light, through his merits who died and rose again for us, and who now sits at the right hand of God, our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

THE OFFICE

FOR

The Holy Communion.

PRAISE thou the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me praise his holy name!

Praise thou the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who redeemeth thy life from destruction, and crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercy! As for man, his days are as grass, as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth; but the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him; and his righteousness unto children's children, to such as keep his covenant, and remember his commandments to do

them. Behold, God is my salvation: I will trust and not be afraid, for the Lord Jehovah is my strength and my song; he is become my salvation.

He himself, by the one oblation of himself, once offered, has made a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and has commanded us to keep a perpetual memorial thereof in the Holy Sacrament, whereby we declare our belief in his word, our hope in his mercy, and our trust in his atonement for us; and by the Communion of his Body and Blood, we receive a confirmation of our faith, and are assured of the favour and goodness of God towards us, in the pardon of all our sins, and are admitted members of Christ's mystical body, and heirs, through hope, of that everlasting kingdom which he has purchased with his own blood.

What shall I render unto the Lord for these his inestimable benefits? I will offer and present myself, my soul and body, to be a reasonable, holy and lively sacrifice unto him; I will believe in him, trust in him, love and honour him with all my heart and mind; I will spend the rest of my days wholly in his service, and to his glory; I will order all my conversation as becometh his gospel; I will crucify the flesh, and keep myself unspotted from the world; I will abstain from all appearance of evil, and do all such good works as he has commanded me to perform. His grace shall be sufficient for me; his power shall rest upon me; his holy spirit shall abide continually with me, to direct, sanctify and govern both my heart and mind in the ways of his laws, and the works of his commandments, trusting that, through his most mighty protection, I shall be preserved both in body and soul to everlasting life.

PRAYER.

Before going to the Altar,

Most gracious God, our heavenly Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification, that we might become the sons of God and heirs of eternal life, look upon me I beseech Thee, and grant, that having this hope I may serve Thee always in pureness and truth, and daily endeavour to follow the blessed steps of his most holy life. It is from thy mercy only that I can do unto Thee any true and laudable service; I pray, therefore, that thy Holy Spirit may govern all my thoughts during the sacred duty I am now about to perform; help me to approach these holy mysteries with fear and reverence, deep humility, and fervent devotion, with a heart

full of faith in Thee, and the most grateful sense of thy infinite goodness in sending thy Son upon earth, and of his inexpressible love to mankind in undertaking and accomplishing the work of our redemption. I would dedicate myself entirely to thy service, and I beseech Thee to accept my contrition for all the faults and errors I have in any way committed, that, though of myself I am an unworthy guest, I may by thy infinite mercy be received at thy Table; and, assisted by thy grace in serving Thee sincerely and acceptably all the days of this mortal life, may in thy due time attain thy everlasting kingdom, through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, my blessed Lord and Saviour. Amen.

The Offertory.

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify

your Father which is in Heaven. St. Matt. v. 16.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where the rust and moth doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither rust nor moth doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. St. Matt. vi. 19, 20.

Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do unto them; for this is the law and the prophets. St. Matt. vi. 12.

Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven. St. Matt. vii. 21.

Zaccheus stood forth, and said unto the

Lord, Behold Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have done any wrong to any man, I restore him fourfold. St. Luke xix. 8.

Who goeth a warfare at any time of his own cost? Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof? Or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? 1 Cor. ix. 7.

If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great matter if we shall reap your worldly things? 1 Cor. ix. 11.

Do ye not know, that they who minister about holy things live of the sacrifice, and they who wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord also ordained, that they who preach the gospel should live of the gospel. 1 Cor. ix. 13, 14.

He that soweth little shall reap little, and he that soweth plenteously shall reap plenteously. Let every man do according as he is disposed in his heart, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver. 2 Cor. ix. 6, 7.

Let him that is taught in the word minister unto him that teacheth in all good things. Be not deceived, God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he reap. Gal. vi. 6, 7.

While we have time let us do good unto all men, and specially to them who are of the household of faith. Gal. vi. 10.

Godliness is great riches, if a man be content with what he hath; for we brought nothing into the world, neither may we carry any thing out. 1 Tim. vi. 6, 7.

Charge them who are rich in this world, that they be ready to give, and glad to distribute; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may attain eternal life. 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18, 19.

God is not unrighteous, that he will forget your works and labour that proceedeth of love; which love ye have showed for His Name's sake, who have ministered unto the saints, and yet do minister. Heb. vi. 10.

To do good, and distribute, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased. Heb. xiii. 16.

Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him? St. John iii. 17.

Give alms of thy goods, and never turn thy face from a poor man, and then the face of the Lord shall not be turned away from thee. Tobit iv. 7.

Be merciful after thy power. If thou hast much, give plenteously: if thou hast a little, do thy diligence gladly to give of that little; for so gatherest thou thyself a good reward in the day of necessity. Tobit iv. 8, 9.

He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and look, what he layeth out it shall be paid him again. Prov. xix. 17.

Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. Psalm xli. 1.

A Prayer when we give Alms.

Blessed Lord, who hast commanded us to have compassion upon our brethren, and hast declared that Thou wilt look upon all our acts of charity as instances of our love towards Thee, accept, I beseech Thee, of this offering which I now make for the relief of the poor, as a testimony of my thankfulness to Thee for all I possess. Fill my heart with such true compassion for the miseries of others, that my desire to relieve them may be ever proportioned to the ability Thou hast given me; and teach me such moderation in all selfish expenses, that I may always have to give to him that needeth. May my prayers and my alms go up before Thee, O God, and graciously accept them for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen.

Prayer for the Church.

Let us pray for the whole state of Christ's church militant here on earth.

Almighty and Ever-living God, who by thy holy Apostle hast taught us to make prayers and supplications, and to give thanks for all men, we humbly beseech Thee most mercifully to accept our alms and oblations, and to receive these our prayers, which we offer unto thy Divine Majesty; beseeching Thee to inspire continually the universal church with the spirit of truth, unity and concord; and grant that all they, that do confess thy holy name, may agree in the truth of thy holy word, and live in unity and godly love. We beseech Thee also to save and defend all christian kings, princes and governors; and especially thy servant George our King, that under him we may

be godly and quietly governed; and grant unto his whole Council, and to all that are put in authority under him, that they may truly and indifferently minister justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice, and to the maintenance of thy true religion and virtue. Give grace, O heavenly Father, to all bishops and curates, that they may, both by their life and doctrine, set forth thy true and lively word, and rightly and duly administer thy holy Sacraments. And to all thy people give thy heavenly grace, and especially to this congregation here present, that, with meek heart and due reverence, they may hear and receive thy holy word, truly serving Thee in holiness and righteousness all the days of their life. And we most humbly beseech Thee of thy goodness, O Lord, to comfort and succour all them, who in this transitory life are in trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or any other adversity. And we also bless thy holy name for all thy ser-

vants departed this life in thy faith and fear; beseeching Thee to give us grace so to follow their good examples, that with them we may be partakers of thy heavenly kingdom: Grant this, O Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen.

Exhortation.

Dearly beloved in the Lord, ye that mind to come to the Holy Communion of the Body and Blood of our Saviour Christ, must consider how St. Paul exhorteth all persons diligently to try and examine themselves, before they presume to eat of that bread, and drink of that cup; for as the benefit is great, if with a true penitent heart and lively faith we receive that Holy Sacrament, (for then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ, and drink his blood; then we dwell in Christ, and Christ in us; we are one with Christ, and Christ with us:) so is the danger great,

if we receive the same unworthily; for then we are guilty of the body and blood of Christ our Saviour; we eat and drink our own damnation, not considering the Lord's body; we kindle God's wrath against us; we provoke him to plague us with divers diseases, and sundry kinds of death. Judge, therefore, yourselves, brethren, that ye be not judged of the Lord; repent you truly for your sins past; have a lively and steadfast faith in Christ, our Saviour; amend your lives, and be in perfect charity with all men; so shall ye be meet partakers of those holy mysteries. And, above all things, ye must give most humble and hearty thanks to God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, for the redemption of the world by the death and passion of our Saviour Christ, both God and man; who did humble himself, even to the death upon the cross, for us miserable sinners; who lay in darkness and the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and

exalt us to everlasting life. And to the end we should always remember the exceeding great love of our Master and only Saviour Jesus Christ, thus dying for us, and the innumerable benefits which, by his precious blood shedding, he hath obtained to us; he hath instituted and ordained holy mysteries, as pledges of his love, and for a continual remembrance of his death, to our great and endless comfort. To Him, therefore, with the Father, and the Holy Ghost, let us give (as we are most bounden) continual thanks, submitting ourselves wholly to his holy will and pleasure, and studying to serve him in true holiness and righteousness all the days of our life. Amen.

Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy

ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.

The Confession.

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Maker of all things, Judge of all men; we acknowledge and bewail our manifold sins and wickedness, which we from time to time most grievously have committed, by thought, word and deed, against thy Divine Majesty, provoking most justly thy wrath and indignation against us. We do earnestly repent and are heartily sorry for these our misdoings; the remembrance of them is grievous unto us, the burden of them is intolerable. Have mercy upon us, have mercy upon us, most merciful Father! for thy Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ's sake, forgive us all that is past; and grant that we may ever hereafter serve

and please Thee in newness of life, to the honour and glory of thy name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Absolution.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of his great mercy hath promised forgiveness of sins to all them that with hearty repentance and true faith turn unto him, have mercy upon you; pardon and deliver you from all your sins; confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, and bring you to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Hear what comfortable words our Saviour Christ saith unto all that truly turn to him: Come unto me, all ye that travail and are heavy laden, and I will refresh you. St. Matt. xi. 28.

So God loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, to the end that all that believe in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. St. John iii. 16.

Hear also what St. Paul saith:—

This is a true saying, and worthy of all men to be received, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners. 1 Tim. i. 15.

Hear also what St. John saith:—

If any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and he is the propitiation for our sins, 1 St. John ii. 1, 2.

Lift up your hearts.

Answ.—We lift them up unto the Lord.

Priest.—Let us give thanks unto our Lord God.

Answ.—It is meet, and right so to do.

Priest.—It is very meet, right, and our

bounden duty, that we should at all times, and in all places, give thanks unto Thee, O Lord, Holy Father, Almighty, Everlasting God.

[*These words,* "Holy Father," *are to be omitted on Trinity Sunday.*]

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious Name, evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High. Amen.

PROPER PREFACES.

Upon Christmas Day.

Because Thou didst give Jesus Christ, thine only Son, to be born as at this time for us; who, by the operation of the Holy Ghost, was

made very man of the substance of the Virgin Mary, his mother, and that without spot of sin, to make us clean from all sin. Therefore, with angels, &c.

Upon Easter Day.

But chiefly are we bound to praise Thee for the glorious resurrection of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord: for he is the very Paschal Lamb which was offered for us, and hath taken away the sin of the world; who by his death hath destroyed death, and by his rising again hath restored to us everlasting life. Therefore, with angels, &c.

Upon Ascension Day.

Through thy most dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, our Lord, who after his most glorious resurrection manifestly appeared to all his apostles, and in their sight ascended

up into heaven to prepare a place for us, that where he is thither we might also ascend, and reign with him in glory. Therefore, with angels, &c.

Upon Whitsunday.

Through Jesus Christ our Lord, according to whose most true promise the Holy Ghost came down as at this time from heaven with a sudden great sound, as it had been a mighty wind in the likeness of fiery tongues, lighting upon the apostles, to teach them, and to lead them to all truth; giving them both the gift of divers languages, and also boldness with fervent zeal, constantly to preach the gospel unto all nations, whereby we have been brought out of darkness and error into the clear light and true knowledge of Thee and of thy Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, with angels, &c.

Upon the Feast of Trinity.

Who art one God, one Lord; not one only person, but three persons in one substance; for that which we believe of the glory of the Father, the same we believe of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, without any difference or inequality. Therefore, with angels, &c.

After each of these Prefaces shall immediately be said,

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the company of heaven, we laud and magnify thy glorious name; evermore praising Thee, and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God of Hosts, heaven and earth are full of thy glory. Glory be to Thee, O Lord, Most High. Amen.

We do not presume to come to this thy Table, O merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to

gather up the crumbs under thy table: but thou art the same Lord, whose property is always to have mercy; grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of thy dear Son Jesus Christ, and to drink his blood, that our sinful bodies may be made clean by his body, and our souls washed through his most precious blood; and that we may evermore dwell in him, and he in us. Amen.

Before the Consecration.

O Lord, my God, great are the wonderful works which thou hast done, like as be also thy thoughts which are to usward, and yet there is no man that ordereth them unto Thee. Thou sparest us when we deserve punishment, and in thy wrath thinkest upon mercy; enter not into judgment with thy servant, but send out thy light and thy truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to thy holy hill and to thy dwelling; that I may go unto the altar of God, even unto the God of my joy

and gladness, and with my heart will I give thanks unto Thee, O God, my God. O how plentiful is thy goodness which thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee, and that Thou hast prepared for them that put their trust in Thee; for Thou art gracious and merciful, long-suffering, and of great goodness. Thou hast given me the defence of thy salvation; thy right hand also shall hold me up, that my footsteps shall not slide. All thy works praise Thee, and thy saints give thanks unto Thee; they show the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power: thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages. Salvation and honour, and glory and power, be unto Thee, O Lord, and unto the Lamb for ever.

The Prayer of Consecration.

Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who of thy tender mercy didst give thine only Son Jesus Christ to suffer death upon the

cross for our redemption; who made there (by his one oblation of himself, once offered) a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, and did institute, and in his holy gospel command us, to continue a perpetual memory of that his precious death, until his coming again; hear us, O merciful Father, we most humbly beseech Thee, and grant that we, receiving these thy creatures of bread and wine, according to thy Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ's holy institution, in remembrance of his death and passion, may be partakers of his most blessed body and blood; who in the same night that he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, Take, eat, this is my body which is given for you: do this in remembrance of me. Likewise, after supper, he took the cup; and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, Drink ye all of this; for this

is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you, and for many, for the remission of sins: do this, as oft as ye shall drink it, in remembrance of me. Amen.

Prayer after the Consecration.

Almighty Lord, who hast of thine infinite mercy vouchsafed to ordain this Sacrament for a perpetual memorial of that blessed sacrifice which once Thou madest for us on the cross; be pleased to accept this our bounden duty and service, and the renewed dedication we now make of ourselves unto Thee; and grant that I, and all who this day attend thy sacred Table, may participate of this holy mystery with such devotion, that, by the merits and powers thereof, we may become partakers of all the benefits of thy most precious death, and resurrection, and glorious ascension into heaven; and give us thy grace, that we may ever remember with such humi-

lity and gratitude thy transcendent love to mankind in thus dying for them, and the great atonement thus made, that the sense of thy sufferings may awaken in us a due abhorrence of sin, and our faith in thy promises may encourage our supplications at the Throne of Mercy for pardon and peace; and I beseech Thee, assist my endeavours in the ways of repentance and holiness, that during the rest of my pilgrimage here I may walk worthy of the faith I profess, and at the general resurrection may be admitted to dwell with Thee for ever. Amen.

Prayer on going to the Altar.

I approach thy holy Table, O Lord, deeply sensible of my own unworthiness. How inconsiderable is the good which I do! how innumerable the failings I daily commit! how shall a sinner dare to appear before Thee, who art of purer eyes than to behold iniquity!

Thou mightest consume me in a moment, but in thy wrath Thou thinkest upon mercy; and though the iniquities of thy people testify against them, yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by thy name: Thou hast assured us of pardon upon the terms of thy gospel; I come to Thee, therefore, O blessed Jesus, as thy disciple, declaring my belief in Thee as the Son of God and Redeemer of Mankind. Blessed be thy goodness which moved Thee to humble thyself to the death of the cross, that we might be lifted up to immortal life. Salvation belongeth unto Thee, and let thy blessing be upon thy servant: I would devote myself for ever to thy love and obedience, and I beseech Thee to assist me with thy grace; give me the increase of faith, hope and charity; be my guide and governor unto death, my comfort and support in my dying hour, and my everlasting portion and happiness in the life to come. Amen.

Before receiving the Bread.

Christ is the bread of life, the living bread which came down from heaven, whereof whosoever eats shall live for ever; behold thy servant O Lord; be it unto me according to thy word.

The Body of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was given for thee, preserve thy body and soul unto everlasting life. Take and eat this in remembrance that Christ died for thee, and feed on him in thy heart by faith, with thanksgiving.

After receiving the Bread.

Lord, I receive this broken bread, the representation of thy body, in memory of thy wonderful incarnation, and meritorious sufferings, whereby Thou hast obtained for me

the pardon of my sins, and the salvation of my soul, upon the terms of faith and obedience. Grant that, being received by me in steadfast faith and humble thankfulness, it may refresh and nourish my soul, and be an effectual means of purifying my heart, till I come to everlasting life, through thy redeeming love. Amen.

Before receiving the Cup.

Grant, merciful God, that the cup I am now going to receive may be to me the cup of salvation; that as Christ is risen from the dead, the first fruits of them that sleep, so I may rise to newness of life, that at length this corruptible body may put on incorruption, and this mortal put on immortality, in thy eternal kingdom.

The Blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, which was shed for thee, preserve thy body and

soul unto everlasting life. Drink this in remembrance that Christ's blood was shed for thee, and be thankful.

After receiving the Cup.

What reward shall I give unto the Lord for all the benefits he hath done unto me? I worship Thee, O Lord, and will magnify thy Name for ever, who hast vouchsafed to fill my soul with gladness, and to feed me with the heavenly mysteries of Christ's sacred body and blood. May they sanctify every thought, and may purity and holiness like his dwell in my heart for ever. Amen.

After receiving in both Kinds.

All glory, and praise, and adoration be given to Thee, O Lord, for all thy mercies. I bless and praise thy Name, most merciful Father, that Thou hast vouchsafed to admit me, this day, to a participation of this Holy Commu-

nion; Thou hast opened to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter in and dwell there; and in confidence of thy gracious assistance, I have now once more declared my solemn resolution against all my sins, and my renewed dedication to thy service: but as my frailty without Thee cannot but fall, I beseech Thee strengthen and support me, that the professions I have now made may not turn to my condemnation; but that the remembrance of the love of Christ may accompany me in all the affairs of my life, and his example regulate and direct all my actions; let the sense of thy continual presence influence my thoughts, that the calmness of a mind, dwelling with Thee, may spread constant cheerfulness over my deportment. I know that temptations must surround me everywhere; but Thou wilt not suffer me to be tempted above what I am able to bear under the shield of thy religion; and I know also, that, in the course and order of things which Thou hast ordained, trials and

afflictions must occur; but grant that, in all my sufferings, I may steadfastly look up to heaven, and by faith behold the glory that shall be revealed; and during all my life assist me, that, by my example, and by charity, I may show benevolence to all my fellow-creatures, and do them all the good which Thou hast put into my power. Give thy blessing to thy church, to the ministers of thy word, and to these kingdoms; and grant to all of us, that, in zeal for thy glory, in contentment, in purity, in charity, in godly sincerity, thy will may be done on earth as it is in heaven; and bless us all with that peace which passeth all understanding, the peace of God, through the merits, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Mediator and Redeemer. Amen.

After all have communicated.

Our Father which art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be

done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil; for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

After which shall be said as follows:

O Lord and heavenly Father, we, thine humble servants, entirely desire thy Fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this our sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; humbly beseeching Thee to grant, that, by the merits and death of thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in his blood, we, and all thy whole church, may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of his Passion. And here we offer, and present unto Thee, O Lord, ourselves, our souls, and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee; humbly beseeching Thee, that all we, who

are partakers of this Holy Communion, may be fulfilled with thy grace and heavenly benediction. And although we be unworthy, through our manifold sins, to offer unto Thee any sacrifice, yet we beseech Thee to accept this our bounden duty and service, not weighing our merits, but pardoning our offences, through Jesus Christ our Lord, by whom, and with whom, in the unity of the Holy Ghost, all honour and glory be unto Thee, O Father Almighty, world without end. Amen.

Or this:

Almighty and Ever-living God, we most heartily thank Thee, for that Thou dost vouchsafe to feed us, who have duly received these holy mysteries, with the spiritual food of the most precious body and blood of thy Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ; and dost assure us thereby of thy favour and goodness towards us; and that we are very members

incorporate in the mystical body of thy Son, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and are also heirs through hope of thy everlasting kingdom, by the merits of the most precious death and passion of thy dear Son. And we most humbly beseech Thee, O heavenly Father, so to assist us with thy grace, that we may continue in that holy fellowship, and do all such good works as Thou hast prepared for us to walk in, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom, with Thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, world without end. Amen.

Then shall be said, or sung, this Hymn:

Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, good-will towards men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for thy great glory, O Lord God, Heavenly King, God the Father Almighty. O Lord, the only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; O Lord God,

Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; Thou that takest away the sins of the world, have mercy upon us; Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; Thou that sittest at the right hand of God the Father, have mercy upon us: for Thou only art holy; Thou only art the Lord, Thou only, O Christ, with the Holy Ghost, art most high in the Glory of God the Father. Amen.

Collects to be said after the Communion, at the discretion of the Minister.

Assist us mercifully, O Lord, in these our supplications and prayers, and dispose the way of thy servants towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Almighty Lord, and everlasting God, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern both our hearts and bodies in the ways of thy laws and in the works of thy commandments, that through thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in body and soul, through our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grant, we beseech Thee, Almighty God, that the words which we have heard this day with our outward ears, may, through thy grace, be so grafted inwardly in our hearts, that they may bring forth in us the fruits of good living, to the honour and praise of thy Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Present us, O Lord, in all our doings, with thy most gracious favour, and further us with thy continual help, that in all our works begun, continued, and ended in Thee, we may glorify thy name, and finally, by thy mercy

obtain everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, the fountain of all wisdom, who knowest our necessities before we ask, and our ignorance in asking; we beseech Thee to have compassion upon our infirmities, and those things which for our unworthiness we dare not, and for our blindness we cannot ask, vouchsafe to give us, for the worthiness of thy Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Almighty God, who hast promised to hear the petitions of them that ask in thy Son's name; we beseech Thee mercifully to incline thine ears to us that have made now our prayers and supplications unto Thee; and grant that those things which we have faithfully asked according to thy will, may effectually be obtained to the relief of our necessity, and to the setting forth of thy glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Blessing.

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, our Lord. And the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always. Amen.

Prayer.

From this moment, O Christ, consecrate that life to Thee, which thou hast redeemed by thy most precious blood. Pardon all my imperfections in the performance of this holy duty; fortify my soul, I beseech Thee, from all the temptations of the world, the flesh and the Devil, that I may live to Thee and to the glory of God. Amen.

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